

## FAIRFIELD COUNTY PLAN OF SAFE CARE IMPLEMENTATION & COORDINATION

### **HOW IT STARTED:**

After receiving the QIC-CCCT grant in 2017, Fairfield County Juvenile Court collaborated with Fairfield County Protective Services to implement and coordinate services focused on families who were affected by parental substance use.

### **Project Goals:**

Improve overall outcomes for families and children affected by substance use disorder by increasing access to services for children and families including pre-birth and prenatal services, improve data collection and sharing among all service providers and increase collaboration and engagement with medical providers in the development of plans.

### **Program Strategies:**

Through cross-system collaboration, Fairfield County developed a coordinated multi-system approach to address the needs of infants affected by prenatal substance exposure and their families. This required partnerships with Fairfield County Juvenile Court, Child Protective Services, treatment providers, medical providers, and other local child and family serving agencies.

**Building upon an existing foundation:** Prior to beginning the work with the QIC grant, Fairfield County already had in existence the Perinatal Leadership Group. This group is a collaboration of organizations in Fairfield County that focus on a coordinated approach to meet the needs of at-risk mothers struggling with challenges such as addiction, mental health concerns, lack of access to prenatal care, and homelessness. This multi-disciplinary team consists of management representatives from each collaborating entity, advocates, and representatives of other organizations, as appropriate to steer a communitywide strategy with the objective of improving overall health outcomes for at-risk mothers and infants.

**Plan of Safe Care Coordinator (POSC):** Through the grant, Fairfield County hired a coordinator to monitor the community POSC and manage data from both community partners and child welfare. Oversight of the coordinator position falls under the scope of the Family, Adult and Children First council. A POSC form was created as well as additional materials such as a POSC brochure and resource guide. The coordinator assists with training the community on CARA as well as plans of safe care. The coordinator is responsible for creating and monitoring POSC, service linkage and community outreach.

**Perinatal Cluster:** This group was implemented as a support to the coordinator position which focuses on the delivery of comprehensive and coordinated services for at-risk mothers struggling with challenges like addiction, mental health concerns, lack of access to prenatal care and homelessness. Perinatal cluster is steered by the Perinatal Leadership Group. At the core, cluster is an integrated team of providers representing multiple systems with the objective being to implement trauma informed care plans to address prenatal care, childbirth and postpartum care, substance use prevention and treatment, housing and basic needs of care for the baby. Client engagement with cluster is voluntary and a release of information is required for service coordination.

**Key Partners:** Implementation, coordination, and continuation of POSC within Fairfield County is a team effort. The following providers assisted with this success: Fairfield Community Health Center, ADAMH Board, Board of DD, Fairfield Department of Health, Fairfield Medical Center, Family, Adult and Children First Council, Help Me Grow, Protective Services, Community Action Housing, Early Childhood Programs, Lutheran Social Services, and local behavioral & recovery service providers.

**Lessons Learned:** Communication is key when partnering with providers. Be flexible, understanding, and listen to the needs of the community. Education on CARA, POSC, and county practice is key to success and implementation within any community. Be accessible to community providers, especially in the medical field. There will be barriers and challenges along the way but perseverance, with a strong team, will help your community overcome these.